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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how the United States may become a marketplace for offshore credentialing, therefore expanding the human capital interested in a profession. The counseling profession is used as an example, as counseling lends itself well to cyberapplications. A list of seven historical reasons is given as to why American professions on the whole need education and planned action from those who could make vast gains by establishing professions in the United States. These reasons are meant to stimulate ideas that might lead to bringing professions to this country. An explanation is given of how globalization of American professions would work. In order to deal with an influx of international workers, two mandates for dealing with the maze of international credentialing are presented. They are: (1) instructing members of the profession with strategies for finding regulations and proper credentials in foreign countries, and in the same view, knowing who to turn to as foreign counterparts; and (2) instructing foreign applicants in how to translate their portfolios into meaningful host-style applications. A three-step checklist for customizing globalization to a profession is provided. (MKA)

Expanding Professions Globally: The United States as a Marketplace for Global Credentialing and Cyberapplications

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Expanding Professions Globally: The United States as a Marketplace for Global Credentialing and Cyberapplications

THOMAS W. CLAWSON

Americans usually assume that globalization means taking our ideas, values, services, and products to the international marketplace. Although this could mean profitable sales, in professions such global offering is more likely to mean expanding the human capital interested in the discipline of the profession.

For a variety of reasons, the most important being the United States' longitudinally strong economic status, we maintain a trade imbalance of more imports than exports. Thus it is logical to predict that the United States' attempt to globalize professions may well result in the same trade deficit that now exists with tangible goods such as automobiles or coffee. With this prediction assumed true, this chapter explores how the United States may become a marketplace for offshore credentialing.

Because I am quite versed in the U.S. profession of counseling, it is this discipline that is most often cited for the purposes of this publication. And because counseling lends itself, for better or worse, to cyberapplications, perhaps this scenario will be a wake up call and a new way of thinking for the helping professions.

In a speech I presented to the sixth annual international conference of the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) (www.cqaie.org) in Washington, D.C., May 1998, I outlined some ideas I have formed regarding the process of bringing service organizations and even new disciplines into the U.S. mainstream. The advent of the World Wide Web has made this fea-

sible because professional organizations are historically low budget operations. Now the large population of the United States with its large number of Internet users is more a market *for* the world than *to* the world.

In the monograph, *The Foundations of Globalization of Higher Education and the Professions* (Lenn & Miller, 1999) I wrote about this subject. CQAIE is quite interested in the effects of cybercommunication upon higher education and the professions. CQAIE has allowed me to excerpt many ideas from my May 1998 speech as recorded in the monograph.

The Center for Quality Assurance in International Education was founded as a collaborative activity of the U.S. self-regulatory community through its participating associations and recognized accrediting and competency assurance bodies. Established in 1991 and located in the National Center for Higher Education, the center is a focal point for discussion and collaboration both within the United States and between the United States and other country associations concerned with issues of quality and fairness in the international mobility of students, scholars, and professionals; credentialing and recognition of programs; and international educational linkages. It facilitates the comparative study of national quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in order to strengthen and improve efforts with each country and promote mobility among national systems. The center's services and program fall essentially into four categories: (1) providing strategic planning and assistance with the development and implementation of accrediting, licensing, and certification programs outside the United States; (2) assisting other countries in the development of quality assurance systems for higher education and the professions; (3) monitoring quality issues relative to the globalization of U.S. higher education and the professional sectors; and (4) serving as secretariat for the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) (www.edugate.org).

In 1998 a sign of financial mergers of the 1980s taking on a global perspective of immense proportions was reported:

Daimler-Benz & Chrysler Announce the World's Largest Merger!

In an age of so many corporate mergers and acquisitions, we take this news with resignation that if it is not good—at least it is the general nature of business today. Yet in 1979, Chrysler was near bankruptcy, and a tax-supported loan from the United States bailed out Chrysler (and Chairman Lee Iacocca) to become a renewed national commodity. This was in an era of “Buy American” and “don’t let Japan and Europe put our workers out of business.”

In 1980 merger of Daimler-Benz and Chrysler would have been thwarted or stopped by public outcry and/or government intervention. Recently, reporters have noted that there has been neither a U.S. government nor popular response—Why? Because globalization is now a forgone conclusion.

I want to introduce an idea that may be unique to readers. That is, as we look at the world of professions and the globalization of professions, we often realize that Americans play a role in taking their professions abroad. I agree, but suggest that for a variety of reasons, Americans have not excelled in globalizing professions. Certainly, they have their strong points in law, accounting, architecture, nursing, engineering, and others, but they lag behind many countries as exporters of services. The reason America is not an exporter has many facets.

Be assured this is not America bashing. Some of my best friends are American, but because we Americans have a habit of talking about ourselves, I want to relate some secrets that could put us in our proper place, that is, in our proper place in the world community of professions. So while pointing out an opportunity for other nations’ professionals to flourish here in the United States, I think that American professionals will benefit from bringing professions here. And I think that for all the expertise we own here, we must first understand professions around the world before we can successfully integrate and later export our ideas productively.

Following are some historical reasons why American professions on the whole need education and planned action from those who could make vast gains by establishing your professions in the United States. Although they are not complete, they are meant to stimulate your ideas that may lead to bringing professions to the United States.

- We teach once we have expertise, and once the cycle of being expert begins, then it is hard to be a student. It can give us a bad reputation for one-sided thinking.
- We have been called upon after wars to "export expertise." It is a habit to respond; we are not as good at spreading our word when not asked.
- There is a natural recalcitrance toward the United States that levels the playing field. Suspicion of U.S. imperialism, as faulty as the idea is in professions, gives other countries an advantage of early trust.
- We are weak at languages because of our history of mass immigration and educational priorities.
- Our economy has been so good for the past 40 years that we look to the home front, not to foreign expansion.
- Our professional workforce is university based, and U.S. universities do not export much. In fact, they compete.
- We have a market available to cultivate, yet we have not seen ourselves as a "developing nation."

I propose that now is the time for offshore professions to come to the United States with aspirations of introducing their style of education, professional practice, professional societies, and regulatory practices.

Why could such a scheme work?

- Americans are especially intrigued with foreigners and foreign language because we do not travel widely. And when we do, we do it briefly and without much cultural immersion. Further, we do not emigrate. Very few Americans need to emigrate, nor do we seek change offshore. And as a whole we shy from language development. It simply is not a priority. Therefore, as a country, we think that multilingual people must be more clever than we are.
- Importation of professional societies and their trappings should have little resistance because it has not been a threat—while the United States is resisted elsewhere.
- The Internet, satellites, and travel make it easy to avoid regulation.
- Education is available for export to the United States. Foreign degrees are recognized and often sought.

- We have 23,000 associations and room for more. Foreign professional associations could be a niche market.
- Association management companies can alleviate corporation problems; foreign associations could be managed by U.S.-based entities.
- Many credentials are being created globally with a small-to-large market here in the United States.
- American economy has two waves of professionals:
 1. Baby Boomers who are ready to spend and are having crises of aging. Baby Boomers are so named from the boom, explosion, of births after World War II.
 2. Generation X and Boomer Echoes who will be the next wave.These are the next two generations. Both groups are susceptible/receptive to new ideas.
- Foreign contact raises the chance of foreign travel and living. Therefore, professionals, especially those who are maturing, will see foreign associations as a way to explore the world in the safety of like-minded professionals.

I recently spoke at a conference of the (U.S.-based) National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) with an audience of some 300 people from 170 professional certifying bodies. When I asked them how many were currently practicing or considering near-future global expansion, 90% gave positive responses. However, with further investigation, I found few succeeding and few with viable plans. My conclusion is that the world need not be preparing itself for an onslaught of U.S. professional expansion.

CUSTOMIZING GLOBALIZATION TO PROFESSIONS

My interest in global credentialing began in 1981 when I started an 8-year odyssey of teaching in and administering a Boston University graduate program in Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, and Spain. Although 95% of my students were Americans associated with the military or diplomatic missions, the remaining 5% were nationals of European countries and presented a new challenge—credential review and explaining the U.S. system. Articulat-

ing degrees was then and is now a major obstacle in cross-cultural education.

I found that merely working in the U.S. environment does not prepare us for "translating" what we do and how we are trained. To this end, I recently completed a document for the United States Information Agency that discussed the problems that professionals face when they attempt to bring their expertise from a foreign country to the United States. Among the areas I covered for those professionals to review were education, experience, and transferring skills. I started by defining terms for those not familiar with our systems, such as *certification*, *credential*, *accreditation*, *licensure*, *registry*, *federal*, and *national*.

In helping foreign émigrés, I suggest checking to see if their profession is properly listed in the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994) and with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.stats.bls.gov>). I also suggest contacting any government's embassy to find out where their labor statistics are kept. Further, the immense resources of the World Wide Web should become a staple of international movement of professions.

Living and working in Europe for 8 years and working in five countries, I got to know lots of professionals and talked to many about moving to all points in the world. Little did I know that their wrestle with our maze of credentials was met with equal consternation from the agencies that would later be befuddled by their potpourri of degrees, diplomas, and credentials. Now we all have our share of needs to master confounding issues of international credentialing of professionals no matter where we are from. As professionals with global expertise, we have two mandates:

1. **Instructing our members of professions with strategies for finding regulations and proper credentials in foreign countries, and in the same view, knowing who we, as professionals, should turn to as foreign counterparts** (National Center for Competency Assurance, 1996). For example,
 - the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is one place where professionals from all countries go around the world to convene and interact;

- most embassies and consulates of nations have a series of trade-related programs; and
 - most international corporations have programs to help with offshore transitions.
2. **Instructing foreign applicants in how to translate their portfolios into meaningful host-style applications** (Gorlin, 1994). At the same time, we face the problem of being able to understand foreign equivalency, even when materials are translated into our language. For example, a professional friend was chagrined when a British student showed up at his university for a "course." When he realized she had moved (with furniture) to the United States to take what she called a course, he found that her British concept of a course was of an entire course of study or master's degree—as opposed to a class. If we cannot translate well in the same language, imagine the avenues of possible error with the scores of languages we will soon face.

A CHECKLIST FOR CUSTOMIZING GLOBALIZATION TO A PROFESSION

Keep the following thoughts/ questions in mind in considering the three questions in this checklist:

- Are global regions considered?
 - What education and training is needed in your profession?
 - What trade/service/industry is affected at home and abroad?
1. What does your profession have to offer
 - to new countries?
 - to other professionals?
 - to similar professions?
 - to a world community?
 2. By going global, can your profession expect to gain
 - prestige?
 - financial benefit?
 - higher service to populations?
 - guild gains?
 3. With globalization, can your profession (in your country) lose

- local prestige?
- change of education/training norms?
- financial risk of exploring offshore markets?
- loss of time in exploring regulatory restrictions?

CONCLUSION

Of course, there is no way to guess correctly what will happen with the globalization of professions, but I will make some assumptions as follows. Travel and communications have changed the course of history so drastically that watching the effect on product industries should give rise to a pattern that service (professional) industries will take. Knowledge is the most flexible commodity to transfer globally. A hundred years ago, professional conferences were necessary because there was no way quickly to get information to many in the same profession. Now conferences are not necessary, but they are important in connecting real people to ideas. The international nature of conferees, of information exchange, and of service professionals' mobility points toward constant widening of linkages among professionals.

At the same time, the widening impact of Internet use will no doubt affect professional movements. The positive effect is, of course, the instant exchange of information. The negative effect could be the disintermediation of service providers. That is, the change or elimination of intermediate suppliers of services like hospitals and architecture firms to direct market access for anyone with Internet access. Professionals may be put in a position of direct marketing all services.

Immigration and emigration of professionals will continue to grow, not just with the rise of international mergers but also with the idea that the world is a smaller, more easily accessed place. There will be more comfort and ease seen in crossing borders as professionals.

The increase in global product trade will pull service (professional) trade along with it. And the opening of new markets in China, Africa, South America, and other places will increase demands for trade. Although it may not be fortunate, it is evident that developing nations will model education and training after current schemes. That will take more professionals abroad to exchange ed-

ucation, and it will unify professional ideologies. This alone could be the most influential part of unifying professions. For as countries develop professions, surely international ties will abound.

Surely the Internet or World Wide Web will be a most viable and stimulating force for globalization of all professions.

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